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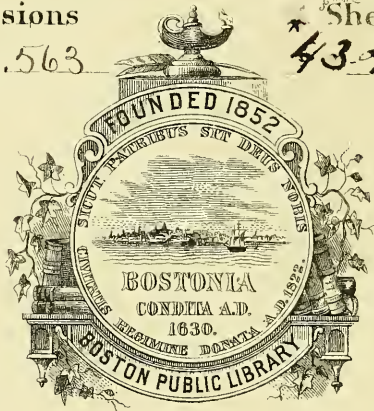
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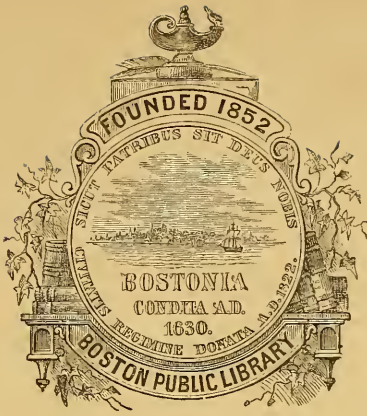
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En Memoriam.



EMERSON OPDYCKE.



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In Memoriam.

GENERAL EMERSON OPDYCKE.

OPDYCKE.—Died, in New York City, April 25, 1884, EMERSON OPDYCKE, late Brevet Major-General U. S. V., in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

At the last Reunion of the *Society of the Army of the Cumberland*, at Cincinnati, who of all our comrades received a heartier welcome, won a more attentive hearing, or gave greater promise of a long and bright future, than EMERSON OPDYCKE? He was the picture of health; and the frank and sincere geniality with which he met his old friends, and returned their greeting, showed that his spirit was as fresh as his physical force was unabated. Strange fate, that one who had braved death a thousand times on the battle-field should at last meet it from an accidental pistol-shot, in his own house, in the midst of his family!

EMERSON OPDYCKE was born at Hubbard, Trumbull county, Ohio, January 7, 1830. His ancestors—who came from Holland—settled on Long Island in 1637; and subsequently moved to New Jersey, where his father was born. He emigrated, early in manhood, to the then western wilderness of Ohio; where his son EMERSON was born—the youngest of seven children. When the boy was only six years old, the family again moved, this time to the extreme north-western corner of the State, to Williams county, then containing only about one thousand inhabitants, and on the very confines of civilization. Here,

with inferior and infrequent schools, and few books, young OPDYCKE divided his time between farm work, hunting and such reading as he could find. Among his books was a life of NAPOLEON, which he eagerly studied, and which doubtless greatly stimulated his military ardor. At the age of eighteen, he left his father's house, to make his own way in the world. Returning to Trumbull county, where he was born, he soon settled in Warren, which had then become a considerable town. A few years later, in 1851, fired with the ambition which had stimulated so many thousands, he went to California, where he remained several years. In 1857 he came back to Warren, with the expectation of making that place his permanent home.

Here he soon after married, and lived happily and successfully—winning the respect and confidence of his townspeople—until the war of secession broke the Nation's peace. When the result of the first battle of Bull Run proved that the work of suppressing the rebellion was not to be finished in ninety days, he enlisted, on the 26th of July, 1861, in the Forty-first Ohio Infantry, commanded by COLONEL W. B. HAZEN, and, on the 26th of August was mustered into the service of the United States as First Lieutenant of Company A. The officers of this regiment were at once subjected to a course of thorough training for their duties. COLONEL HAZEN, who had been an instructor at West Point, brought with him all the ideas and traditions of the Military Academy. LIEUTENANT OPDYCKE devoted himself with the utmost diligence to his duties, and soon ranked number one in this school of instruction. When, a little later, the regiment reached Kentucky, he was detailed to instruct and drill the officers of the other regiments in the brigade. It was by such means that NELSON'S Division won that reputation for discipline and military bearing that afterward distinguished it.

On the 9th of February, 1862, LIEUTENANT OPDYCKE was commissioned Captain of Company A; and the regiment soon after embarked for the Cumberland river, expecting to take part in the attack on Fort Donelson. Before reaching that point, the fort and its garrison had unconditionally surrendered to GENERAL GRANT—and the whole of NELSON'S division kept on to Nashville—where it arrived on the

25th. The troops of this division were the first to enter the town, and to unfurl the National Flag in the Capital of Tennessee. Here the army was concentrated, and soon after began its march toward the immortal field of Shiloh. The story of NELSON'S impetuous advance to that battle-field, and of his services on the 7th of April, are to us as household words. This was CAPTAIN OPDYCKE'S first battle; and in it he showed the same ardor and gallantry which afterward made him famous. Seizing the colors, at a critical moment, when the order to charge had been given, he sprang in front of the regiment, which bravely responded, breaking and scattering in disorder two Texas regiments, and helping to capture a battery. In this engagement CAPTAIN OPDYCKE was twice wounded, and the regiment lost nearly forty per cent of its effective force, with only two men missing. For his conduct in this battle he was handsomely mentioned by his regimental commander.

He shared in all the movements of the army until the following August, when he was ordered to Ohio on recruiting service. While thus engaged he was commissioned by GOVERNOR TOD as Colonel of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Ohio, and, at the head of that regiment—which was mustered in on the 1st day of January, 1863—he returned to Nashville, and was thence ordered to Franklin, which place he reached on the 12th of February, just in time to aid in driving off a force of the enemy infesting the country south of the Harpeth. Here he remained until June, diligently employing the time in drilling and instructing his regiment. At this time, just before the advance of the army on Chattanooga, the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth was assigned to HARKER'S brigade, WOOD'S division, Twenty-first Corps, and joined its new command at Murfreesboro. Taking its full share in all those brilliant operations by which BRAGG was expelled from Tennessee, the brigade to which COLONEL OPDYCKE was attached first entered Chattanooga on the 9th of September.

In the fierce contest of Chickamanga COLONEL OPDYCKE'S regiment bore a conspicuous part. It was the first time it had ever engaged in a great battle; but, under his leadership, it showed the courage and steadfastness of veterans. On the afternoon of the 19th

of September, it was warmly engaged. On the 20th, when the right rear of the division was threatened by an overwhelming force of the enemy, who had swarmed through the gap in our lines, the brigade changed front, and the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth, under OPDYCKE'S orders, charged bayonets, broke the opposing line, and held the ground it gained until other regiments came up, on either side, to his support. This brave and skillful assault prevented the enemy from then gaining possession of the Rossville road. His promptness and gallantry in this action were every-where recognized; but the battle was not yet over. The enemy again advanced in such force that the little brigade was compelled to retire, OPDYCKE'S regiment firing by volleys as it slowly gave ground. It soon took a new position, under direction of GENERAL THOMAS, in person, on the crest of a low ridge which the General declared must be held. "Tell GENERAL THOMAS we will hold it, or go to Heaven from it," was OPDYCKE'S reply; and the ridge was held, though with the loss of one-third of the regiment in killed and wounded. For his conduct at Chickamauga, he was warmly recommended for promotion, but the ranks of Brigadier-Generals were then full.

" In the reorganization which followed soon after the occupation of Chattanooga, the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Ohio was assigned to SHERIDAN'S division. HARKER'S brigade being enlarged to nine regiments. COLONEL OPDYCKE, just before the battle of Missionary Ridge, was placed in command of a demi-brigade of five regiments. In that wonderful battle, during the ascent of the ridge on the afternoon of November 25, 1863, he had three horses shot under him. On reaching the crest, his troops captured BRAGG'S headquarters and six guns there stationed. The story of what followed—the pursuit of the flying enemy, the urgent march to Knoxville, and the comfortless winter campaign in East Tennessee—need not be told.

With the opening spring came preparations for the Atlanta campaign. In the early days of May began the movement against Dalton by the grand army under GENERAL SHERMAN. On the 8th, COLONEL OPDYCKE, by quick and judicious action, gained possession, with his regiment, of the crest of Rocky Face Ridge, north of Buz-

zard Roost. Here the rest of the brigade joined him, and they remained there, overlooking all the enemy's movements, until Dalton was abandoned on the 12th. On the afternoon of the 14th, his brigade relieved a portion of the Twenty-third Corps at Resaca, where he was severely wounded in the arm; but continued with his command. He bravely participated in all the actions of the "One Hundred days," until Atlanta was "ours and fairly won." At Kenesaw he was in the charge where the gallant HARKER fell, COLONEL BRADLEY succeeding to the command of the brigade. In August he was assigned to the command of the First Brigade, Second Division, Fourth Corps, COLONEL FRANK SHERMAN'S old brigade. With this he remained till the end of the war.

On the advance of HOOD'S army to the Tennessee river, in October, 1864, the Fourth Corps was sent back from Georgia to help defend that line. To prevent being cut off from the crossings of Duck river, the forces fell back from Pulaski to Columbia, and thence to Franklin. At Spring Hill, on the 29th of November, COLONEL OPDYCKE held the left of the line which resisted FORREST'S and CHEATHAM'S attacks, and prevented their gaining possession of the turnpike. After this perilous day and night, he commanded the rear guard in the retreat to Franklin, with extraordinary skill and energy. On arriving near the lines before that town, he at once saw the falsity of the position in advance of the works, in which the division had been left by somebody's negligence or error. He therefore withdrew his own brigade and placed it in reserve, behind the opening at the Columbia pike. The event soon showed his wisdom. When CHEATHAM'S resistless assault had overwhelmed the two hapless and misplaced brigades, and the men of CLEBURNE'S and BROWN'S divisions broke in swarms over the works, OPDYCKE brought up his brigade, at the double quick, with fixed bayonets. It was at the very moment when help was most needed and most useful. Striking the enemy a well-directed blow, when least expected, and before the disordered lines had had time to reform, he drove them back beyond the works, at the instant of their fancied triumph, and held his ground till the end.

In this heroic action COLONEL OPDYCKE proved himself a great

soldier, as well as a brave man. He was instantly recognized as *the* one who, in the strictest sense of the words, saved the day at Franklin. It was his forethought, his courage, his personal intrepidity, which averted the calamity. He was in the thickest of the fight, inspiring and cheering on his men. Losing his horse at the very beginning of the charge, he fought for the rest of the day on foot, at the head of his command, until the nearly victorious rebels were driven away from the works they had occupied and the guns they had captured—with a loss, on their part, in front of his single brigade, of over four hundred prisoners and ten battle-flags. So strongly was his Corps Commander, GENERAL STANLEY, impressed with his conduct, that, on the 2d of December, immediately on the arrival of the army at Nashville, and while still suffering from the wound he himself had received, he wrote to GENERAL THOMAS, in advance of his formal report, recommending COLONEL OPDYCKE'S immediate promotion, with the view of assigning him to the command of the division. In this letter, GENERAL STANLEY says: "By personal and strenuous exertion, by fearless exposure of person, he was more instrumental in securing the repulse of the rebels in the battle of Franklin than any other officer who came under my observation. I attribute to him the saving of that battle-field." GENERAL COX, GENERAL WAGNER, and other officers who saw him that day, give similar testimony to his transcendent services.

The battle of Franklin justly gave COLONEL OPDYCKE a national reputation. His comrades knew that he needed no such occasion to test his character. That had already been tested on many a battle-field. But in the presence of the tremendous hazard at Franklin, which would have confused or unnerved a weaker man, COLONEL OPDYCKE rose to the occasion. The overwhelming danger which confronted him only made him cooler and more gallant. At the precise time and place where and when help was most needed, he was, by his own prescience, at hand to give it. His gallant bearing, at the supreme moment, inspired every man under him with his own lofty courage and energy. It is not often that a brigade commander can show, so unmistakably, the possession of the highest attributes of a soldier. But, in this instance, circumstances gave him the opportunity

of revealing to the whole world the quality of his manhood. It was not an exceptional, but only a more conspicuous, exhibition of the same courage he had shown at Shiloh, at Chickamauga, at Mission Ridge, at Rocky Face, at Resaca, at Kenesaw. The value of his services on the 30th of November, 1864, can not be overstated. Defeat to the national arms at Franklin meant the almost unopposed march of the rebel army to the banks of the Ohio, and the complete condemnation of the "march to the sea." For its salvation from these dreadful alternatives the country is indebted, more than to any other man, to the conduct of COLONEL OPDYCKE.

At the battle of Nashville, he again showed the same heroic character which always distinguished him. His brigade, on the first day, greatly aided in the success of Post's brilliant assault on Montgomery Hill, and was among the first to pierce the enemy's lines near the salient, at Hillsboro pike; and, on the morning of the second day, he gained a position on Overton Hill in advance of the other brigades on that part of the field, and, in the afternoon, captured one flag, three guns, and two hundred prisoners. There, as every-where else, his conduct was that of a high-minded, patriotic soldier—always alert, cheerful, confident, brave, industrious, prudent, and provident.

The rank to which he had so often proved himself entitled only came to him—as to many others—long after the occasion when he had fairly won it, and when he could no longer use it on the battle-field. As a Captain, he had frequently served as field-officer; as Colonel, he commanded a brigade in some of the most important and critical actions—and always with skill and courage. He was not even made a Brevet Brigadier-General until the fighting was over, and the distinction was merely a nominal one. On the 7th of February, 1865, he received that somewhat empty honor. His promotion, as full Brigadier-General, was delayed until July. More than eighteen months after that, on the 26th of February, 1867, his signal services in the good cause were still further recognized by his appointment, confirmed on the 2d of March, as Brevet Major-General—his commission reading: "To date from the 30th day of November, 1864, for important and gallant services at the battle of Franklin, Tennessee"—thus

antedating his commission as Brevet Brigadier-General, an almost unprecedented distinction. After the Fourth Corps was sent to Texas, GENERAL OPDYCKE was assigned to the command of the division to which his brigade had so long been attached. But the days of active service were happily past. He had little love for the mere routine of military life; and, in the autumn of 1865, obtained permission to return home, and to report thence by letter to the War Department. On the 1st day of January, 1866, he resigned.

When the close of the rebellion led to the reorganization of the Army, GENERAL OPDYCKE was most warmly recommended for appointment as Field Officer in the regular army. This recognition of his merits was urged in the strongest terms by all his superior officers—especially by GENERALS STANLEY, WOOD, and THOMAS. The latter, in his letter of recommendation, said: “Knowing GENERAL OPDYCKE personally, and being fully informed and convinced of his abilities, I do most earnestly request that this appointment may be conferred upon him for his meritorious and gallant conduct, feeling assured that he will do nothing but that which will reflect credit upon himself and the army.” It is plain to see that this is not the empty language of official eulogy. It is the sincere expression of real appreciation.

GENERAL OPDYCKE, however, was not destined for army life. Soon after his resignation, he entered upon active business in New York City, and soon became partner in one of the leading wholesale dry goods houses in that city. Continuing for some years in that line, with varying success, he at last connected himself with the banking-house of OPDYCKE & Co., with which he remained identified until his sudden and untimely death.

He was always deeply interested in whatever concerned the welfare and good name of the *Army of the Cumberland*. During his later years he gave much time to the study of its campaigns, an account of some of which he published. His paper on the battles of Franklin and Nashville, given to the public in the columns of the *New York Times* two years ago, is not only the best statement and analysis yet made of the movements which led to those decisive encounters, but among the best critical narratives of any campaign of our civil war

which has yet been printed. It is worthy of a permanent place in our war literature. His mind had naturally a military bent. He had carefully studied the principles of strategy and tactics, and he applied them, with force and clearness, to the varying problems of that great campaign. The result is seen in the masterly way in which he brings before us the defects, and achievements, in those operations by which HOOD'S army was at last annihilated.

It is not, however, merely as a soldier that our comrade held and deserved a high place in our affection and esteem. In all his personal relations, GENERAL OPDYCKE was a gentleman of the best type. With a bright, glowing, genial countenance, a hearty frankness of speech and manner, a warm and abiding interest in all that is best and most worthy, he at once gained the regard and confidence of every one with whom he was brought in contact. His daily life and conversation were exactly what one would wish from one's best friend. Ardent in his attachments, outspoken in his opinions, thoroughly sincere in all his works and deeds, he was incapable of a mean or ignoble thought or act. His whole life was clean and unspotted. No man was ever more loyal to his friends, to his country, to all upright principles. He unhesitatingly gave his whole trust and confidence to every cause and every man that seemed to him to deserve them; he as unhesitatingly withheld them when he believed them undeserved. The glowing eulogy he pronounced on the memory and deeds of our great Commander, at the Cincinnati Reunion last year, shows at once the fervor and the spirit of his devotion. Much of what he then said might fitly be applied to himself—taken away at about the same age with that noble General who was to him, and to us all, the ideal hero of the war. A man's character is indicated as much by what he admires as by what he does. Applying either test, it is only the simple truth to say that among all the heroes who, by their services and example helped to re-establish, on the sure foundations of liberty, justice, and law, the great republic which is at once our ward and our guardian, few were abler, and none more faithful, more gallant, more devoted than EMERSON OPDYCKE.

A few weeks before his death he went from New York to lecture

at Harvard University, before a select audience, on the battles of Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. All who heard him were charmed with the clearness and simplicity with which he told the story of those famous engagements. While there he was the guest of an old friend and companion-in-arms, whose family had never before seen him. Those two days will ever be cherished as among the brightest memories of a life-time. The children, when they heard of his death, mourned as at the loss of a dear and much loved relative, so firm a hold did his warm and affectionate nature take on their young hearts. Till the hour of their death, they too will delight to honor his memory.

GENERAL OPDYCKE leaves a widow and one son to mourn his untimely death. His remains were taken to Warren, where most of his early manhood was spent, and with which he was closely identified. Here, among those who had known him longest, and, next to his army comrades, loved him best, his body was laid at rest after a career full of honor and glory. His life and example remain an incentive and inspiration to noble manhood for all coming time.

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Rev James Freeman Clarke

with regards of

Daniel Goodwin Jr

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MEMORIAL
OF
THE LIVES AND SERVICES
OF
JAMES PITTS
AND HIS SONS,
JOHN, SAMUEL AND LENDALL,
DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.
1760-1780.



